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REMARKS

By the above actions, claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 16, and 19 have been amended and claims 1 & 2 and non-elected claims 26-34 have been canceled (in addition to previously cancelled non-elected claims 34-60) subject to applicants' right to file a divisional application relative thereto. In view of the actions taken and the following remarks, further consideration of this application is now requested.

In view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 4-6, these claims have been rewritten in independent form. Thus, formal allowance of these claims is in order; claims 7 & 8 have already been allowed. Additionally, by the above amendments, all of the dependent claims depend directly or indirectly from one of the allowed claims.

Claims 3, 9, and 10 were rejected under the first paragraph of 35 USC § 112 with regard to the recitations of two axially spaced sealing members in the intermediate regions. However, it is pointed out that the Examiner appears to have overlooked that fact that claim 1 does not require all of the sealing members to be in the intermediate area, but rather states that are located "*at least* in an intermediate region of its axial length," meaning as long as one is in the intermediate area, others can be present which are not so located. Thus, claim 3 is submitted to properly read on the elected embodiment in which *at least* seal member 22 is located in the intermediate area sealing member 20 while seal 20 located axially spaced from it at one end of the cylindrical portion. As for claims 9 and 10, this rejection is inapplicable to amended claim 9 and claim 10 has been cancelled. In view of the foregoing, this rejection should now be withdrawn and such action is hereby requested.

Claims 9 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. However, the Examiner's reason for this rejection appears to be inappropriate. For example, with regard the elected embodiment, it can be seen that a sealing member 20 is located at one end of the cylindrical portion, another sealing member 22 is located in the intermediate area and a sealing member is formed by the flange portion 14 at the other end of the intermediate portion. Thus, it is readily apparent how sealing members are in the intermediate region as well as at the end of the cylindrical portion, and these claims have been amended to more expressly reflect these characteristics. Thus, this rejection should be

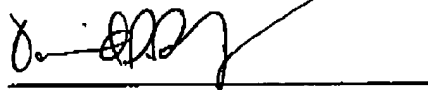
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withdrawn, and if it should be maintained, the Examiner is requested to explain more fully the basis of her confusion.

The prior art rejections have all been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 1 & 2 and the amending of the dependency of claim 11 (the reference to claim 5 in the Examiner's rejections being an apparent error since claim 5 depends from allowable claim 4. Thus, the prior art rejections should now be withdrawn.

Entry of this Amendment is in order since it merely addresses formal issues and otherwise places the application in condition for allowance, and raises no new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. Accordingly, allowance of this application is requested. However, while the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, should the Examiner find some issue to remain unresolved, or should any new issues arise, which could be eliminated through discussions with applicant's representative, then the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone in order that the further prosecution of this application can thereby be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,



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